

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, AO, GB, OAU

SUBJ: ANGOLA AND THE OAU SUMMIT -- GABONESE VIEW

REF: STATE 010166

1. SUMMARY. GABONESE PRESIDENT BONGO REMAINS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO FNLA/UNITA IN ANGOLAN SITUATION, BUT NOT YET CLEAR ON APPROPRIATE NEXT STEPS FOR STATES OPPOSING MPLA CLAIM TO BE SOLE LEGITIMATE REGIME. END SUMMARY.

2. BOTH IN MEETING JANUARY 15 AND IN LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD RECEIVED THIS MORNING (LIBREVILLE 101), GOG PRESIDENT BONGO HAS AGAIN MADE CLEAR HIS DETERMINATION TO SUPPORT FNLA/UNITA WITH OBJECT OF BLOCKING MPLA TAKEOVER OF ANGOLA AND PRODUCING EVENTUAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONA UNION.

3. IT WAS EQUALLY CLEAR FROM CONVERSATION, HOWEVER, THAT BONGO NOT YET CERTAIN WHAT NEXT STEPS SHOULD BE FOR GABON AND LIKE-MINDED STATES. HE WAS PLEASED AT SUCCESS OF MODERATES IN HOLDING LINE DURING OAU SUMMIT, BUT AGREED THAT BATTLE WAS FAR FROM WON. I MENTIONED RISK THAT PRO-MPLA STATES WILL SEEK TO ACHIEVE OAU MAJORITY AND THEN PRESS FOR ADMISSION OF MPLA TO ORGANIZATION (TACTIC OUTLINED BY OAU A/SYG ONU IN ADDIS ABABA 0431), WHICH PRESIDENT ACKNOWLEDGED WAS REAL THREAT, BUT HE OFFERED NO SUGGESTION ON MOST EFFECTIVE

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TACTICS TO COUNTER THIS THURST.

4. IN HIS LETTER, BONGO SUGGESTS RECOGNITION OF FNLA/UNITA REGIME AS ONE WAY OF REMOVING ADVANTAGE CURRENTLY ENJOYED BY MPLA AS ONLY ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT TO HAVE GAINED INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION. IN CONVERSATION WITH ME, HOWEVER, PRESIDENT EXPRESSED DOUBTS ABOUT THIS COURSE NOT APPARENT FROM THE LETTER. GABON, HE NOTED, FOLLOWS FRENCH JURISPRUDENCE IN RECOGNIZING STATES RATHER THAN GOVERNMENTS, AND HE APPEARED CONCERNED ABOUT DEPARTURE FROM THIS POLICY (AND PERHAPS ABOUT EFFECTS OF SIMILAR JURISPRUDENCE ELSEWHERE IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA ON NUMBER OF POSSIBLE RECOGNITIONS). IN ANY EVENT, PRESIDENT AGAIN EMPHASIZED, FIRST RECOGNITION OF FNLA/UNITA REGIME WOULD HAVE TO COME FROM ZAIRE WHICH IS MOST DIRECTLY INVOLVED.

5. PRESIDENT SAID HE WAS PLANNING TO CALL IVORIAN PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY NEXT DAY AS FIRST STEP IN RENEWED ROUND OF CONSULTATIONS AMONG ANTI-MPLA FORCES. HE ADDED THAT BASIC DECISION FACING THEM WAS WHETHER TO STAND STILL ON OAU STALEMATE OR TO TAKE FRESH ACTION AND, IF LATTER COURSE CHOSEN, WHAT ACTION TO TAKE.

6. PRESIDENT EXPRESSED CONCERN LEST DOMESTIC CONSIDERATIONS IN US PREVENT USG FROM PLAYING ROLE HE DEEMS ESSENTIAL OF PROVIDING COUNTERFORCE TO SOVIETS IN ANGOLA (THEME ALSO DISCUSSED IN HIS LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD). BONGO SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE IN USG INTEREST TO INVITE SELECTED AFRICAN CHIEFS OF STATE TO US SO THAT THEY COULD ADD THEIR VOICES, IN PUBLIC GATHERINGS AND IN MEETINGS WITH CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS, TO HELP CONVINCE DOUBTERS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF USG PRESENCE IN ANGOLAN SITUATION. HE SAID IT WOULD BE EQUALLY HELPFUL IF CONGRESSIONAL CRITICS COULD BE PERSUADED TO VISIT SUCH COUNTRIES AS GABON, WHERE THEY COULD HEAR FIRST-HAND FROM HIM AND LIKE-MINDED LEADERS ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE SOVIET THREAT AND COULD SEE FOR THEMSELVES THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH IT IS VIEWED BY RESPONSIBLE AFRICAN LEADERSHIP.

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7. PRESIDENT CONCLUDED WITH RENEWED EXPRESSION OF HIS HOPE THAT USG WOULD BE ABLE RESPOND POSITIVELY TO GOG REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO COUNTER THREAT POSED BY SOVIET-EQUIPPED NEIGHBORS.

8. I HAVE SENT TO PRESIDENT AND FONMIN THIS MORNING TEXTS OF JANUARY 14 REMARKS BY SECRETARY AND ASSISTANT

SECRETARY SCHAUFLE ON ANGOLA.

9. PRESIDENT SAID HE HOPED SEE ME AGAIN EARLY NEXT WEEK,
AT WHICH TIME I MAY BE ABLE GET FURTHER READING ON NEXT
STEPS HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES PLAN TO TAKE WITH REGARD
TO ANGOLAN SITUATION. STEIGMAN

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